

Classics in Linguistics

Ling3356.01
Tuesday & Thursday 10:30–11:45
Lyons Hall 315

Margaret Thomas
Office: Lyons Hall 210i; Tel.: 617 552–3697
Office hrs.: Online, MWF; times vary. Make an appointment on GoogleMeet (*not* Zoom) [here](#)
Email: thomasm@bc.edu

1. Course description

Ling3356 is an introduction to the history of linguistics, organized chronologically from the ancient world to the present day. Our emphasis is on the development of the language sciences in cultures with historical roots in Europe, but there is some treatment of language study in non-western societies. I expect students to take an active role in discussion, and to prepare thoughtfully for each class. Assignments include: four short written exercises of varied natures; a midterm and a final exam; and a more ambitious semi-collaborative project, to be defined jointly by students and instructor, which will give you an opportunity to display expert use of both primary and secondary sources in the history of linguistics.

Ling3356 is designed for upper-division Linguistics majors and graduate students in Linguistics, and presupposes exposure to the major subfields, analytic tools, and conceptual vocabulary of the modern field.

2. Course materials

One textbook is required, and is available at the B.C. Bookstore under Ling3356: *Fifty Key Thinkers on Language and Linguistics* (Thomas, 2011, Routledge). Additional readings and audio-visual materials will be posted on Blackboard for study in advance of each class.

3. Grading

Major project	See attached schedule for sequence of due dates	35%
4 short exercises	Due c. every 4 weeks. See schedule	20%
Midterm exam	Thursday 18 March, in class	20%
Final exam	Wednesday 12 May, 12:30–2:30 PM	25%

Final course grades are those described in the *Boston College Bulletin* (i.e. A, A–, B+, etc.). In general: A ≥ 97% ; B = 86 to 89% ; C = 75 to 78% ; D = 64 to 67% ; F ≤ 59% . ‘Plus’ and ‘minus’ grades fall in between.

Please read the essay ‘About grades & grading’ posted on Canvas > Modules > Course Organization

4. Student Responsibilities

Regular attendance and careful preparation for class are essential. In advance of each class meeting, read the assigned chapters from our textbook. Then go to Canvas > Modules to locate the folder keyed to that class meeting, where you will find additional readings, multi-media, photographs, etc. to absorb before class. In most cases, the folders contain excerpts from the writings of the two figures that are in focus—and

sometimes texts (or audio/video materials) that support, criticize, or develop their ideas.

The times and dates for midterm and final exams are fixed, and cannot be moved.

Students must be thoroughly familiar with College-wide policies regarding academic integrity. Refresh your understanding by taking this [quiz](#).

5. Provisional course schedule & outline of assignments

Class	Date	Topic	Before class, read posted materials & Ch...	Assign / Ex due in class
1	Th 1/28	Intro to linguistic historiography; Pāṇini		
2	Tu 2/2	Intro; Pāṇini; Plato; Aristotle	1; 2; 3	
3	Th 2/4	Varro; Language in the Bible	4; 5	
4	Tu 2/9	Sībawayhi; 'The First Grammarian'	7; 8	Exercise 1
5	Th 2/11	'Can history be open source?'	Posted texts	
6	Tu 2/16	Donatus & Priscian; Spec. Grammarians	6; 9	
7	Th 2/18	King Sejong; Wilkins	10; 12	Exercise 2
8	Tu 2/23	Arnauld & Lancelot; Locke	11; 13	
9	Th 2/25	Johnson; Murray	14; 24	Exercise 3
10	Tu 3/2	Condillac; Herder	15; 16	
11	Tu 3/9	Schlegel brothers; Humboldt	17; 18	Exercise 4
12	Th 3/11	Grimm; Bopp	19; 20	
13	Tu 3/16	Müller; Broca	21; 22	
14	Th 3/18	MID-TERM EXAM	Prep for exam	
15	Tu 3/23	Whitney; Sweet	23; 25	Intro to group project
16	Th 3/25	Brugmann; Jespersen	27; 29	
17	Tu 3/30	Baudouin de Courtenay; Saussure	26; 28	
18	Th 4/1	Jones; Firth	30; 34	
19	Tu 4/6	Sapir; Whorf	31; 37	Project deadline 1
20	Th 4/8	Bloomfield; Vygotsky	32; 35	
21	Tu 4/13	Jakobson; Hjelmslev	36; 38	Project deadline 2
22	Th 4/15	Wittgenstein; Austin; Grice	33; 39; 41	
23	Tu 4/20	Pike; Greenberg	40; 42	
24	Th 4/22	Hockett; Chomsky	43, 47	
25	Tu 4/27	Hale; McCawley	48, 49	Project deadline 3
26	Th 4/29	Brown; Halliday	44; 45	
27	Tu 5/4	Labov; Cameron	46; 50	
28	Th 5/6	Review for exam	TBD	Project due
Wed 5/12		FINAL EXAM, 12:30–2:30 PM		